PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

ADVISORY COUNCIL

ON THE

STATUS OF WOMEN

ANNUAL REPORT

1982-83

44 V

Honourable Leone Bagnall
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Dear Ms. Bagnall:

It is my pleasure to present to you the 1982-83 Annual Report of the Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Included you will find activity reports and financial statements for the year ended March 31, 1983.

Sincerely,

Margaret A. Ashford

Margaret A. Ashford
Chairperson

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The year 1982-83 has been a typical year in the history of the struggle for women's rights: a year in which some gains have been made, but one in which the difficulty of women's struggle to attain their rightful place as full and equal participants in our society has been well illustrated.

Amongst the gains, we witnessed in May 1982 the legislation of maternity leave in this province. Various groups, including the P.E.I. Advisory Council on the Status of Women, had made representations to government in support of legislated maternity leave, for at least ten years. At last, the 16,000 (approximately) non-unionized women workers in this province must not be penalized by their employers in their efforts to fulfill their dual roles as productive members of the paid labour force and as the bearers and primary nurturers of our children. While this in itself is a gain for women, the current legislation must be regarded as only a beginning. There is no provision for paternity leave, which would recognize the role of fathers in the nurturing of infants; adoption leave is guaranteed only to females and only for six weeks, compared to seventeen weeks for biological mothers.

Common Ground, the first Island women's newspaper, has now completed its first successful year in publication. A vehicle for women to communicate with each other on the myriad of subjects of interest to them, *Common Ground* serves a multi-faceted purpose as an educational tool, a consciousness-raising tool, a forum for exchange of ideas on issues, and a mirror in which women see themselves reflected in the experiences, concerns, anxieties and accomplishments of other Island women. No other medium serves all these purposes and the Advisory Council is proud to have been involved in *Common Ground's* success to date. Our congratulations must go also, to all those individuals, companies, groups and government departments which have given support in various ways.

The greatest blow dealt to the women of this province, and the country, during the past year, was the advent of pornography on pay television, offered to subscribers under the guise of "adult entertainment". The programmes already screened can only prove to women that they are still largely regarded as bubble-headed pieces of flesh, as sex objects to be exploited for the gratification and profit of commercial interests and those who use pornography. Those of us who have seen the programmes currently being screened by the Playboy Channel in the U.S.A. can only look to the future of "adult entertainment" on Canadian pay TV with horror and dread. It is my firm belief that such programming will have an immeasurable impact on women in the future: we must recognize the influence such programming will have on attitudes toward women; on the levels of aggression which will become acceptable and indeed commonplace; on the health of relationships between people who has been taught by example that for women, pain equals pleasure. We must tackle the question of censorship versus the "civil liberties" of the producers, distributors and users of pornography. In fact, we must get beyond this quite superficial question of censorship or controlling what is already produced, and get right to the beginning - we must stop the production of the material.

The pressure on legislators, sponsors, producers and distributors which developed earlier this year must not decrease. It must continue until we have achieved changes in legislation that recognize pornography as hate material against women and prohibits it in the same way that hate material againt religious and racial groups is prohibited; until we have achieved objective tests based on degradation and violence to assess materials, rather than the loose, subjective "community standards" which are currently in place.

In completing my second and final year as chairperson of the P.E.I. Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I am gratified by several developments: the internal working of the Council has been streamlined by the addition of a part-time clerical assistant, on loan to us from the Department of Labour; there has been an increase in the amount of liaison work with other women's groups, as well as public education and, I believe, a much greater awareness of Council's activities amongst the women of the Island. As well, the Council has been very active in the presentation of briefs and submissions to government departments and representatives in a number of areas, including pensions, daycare, workers' compensation and the sexual assault provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada.

Naturally, as the Council becomes more widely known and respected, more and more demands are placed upon it by the women whom the Council attempts to represent. Council therefore continually reassesses priorities and directions in the light of current issues and concerns, within the confines of a limited budget. An underlying concern of the Council is that, despite times of restraint and financial difficulty, the concerns of women must be addressed fairly and seriously by government. Women's concerns must not be placed "on hold" until economic times have improved.

I would like to thank the other members of the Council, members of other women's groups and the public at large, as well as our staff members, for their support of my work, and for their own efforts on behalf of the women of P.E.I. during the last year.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret A. Ashford

THE COUNCIL'S MANDATE

The Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established in 1975 by the Executive Council of the Provincial Government. The Advisory Council reports to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and its terms of reference are:

1. To assist the Minister Responsible in the development of public awareness of issues affecting the status of women.

2. To promote a change in attitudes within the community in order that women may enjoy an equality of opportunity.

3. To encourage discussion and expression of opinion by Island residents on recommendations contained in the federal Royal Commission Report on the Status of Women and the Report of the Provincial Advisory Committee on the Status of Women.

4. To advise the Minister with respect to matters relating to the status of women as the Minister Responsible may refer to the Advisory Council for its consideration or as the Advisory Council considers appropriate.

The Advisory Council consists of nine members who are appointed for three year terms by the Executive Council. The Chairperson is appointed by the Executive Council for a term of one year. The Advisory Council elects its own Vice-Chairperson and Treasurer.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Margaret Ashford, Chairperson
East Royalty

Patricia Gray, Vice-Chairperson
Fortune Bay

Sylvia Johnson, Treasurer
Summerside

Geneva King
Elmsdale

Helen MacDonald
Charlottetown

Maureen MacKay
Murray River

Ruth Power
Bunbury

Geraldine Sullivan
Cardigan

Anne Marie Perry, Tignish — Ex Officio - P.E.I. Representative on the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women

COUNCIL STAFF

The Advisory Council employs an executive assistant, Maureen Malloy, four days a week. The Council receives typing services from the Administrative Officer for the P.E.I. Human Rights Commission, Sherry Finley. During the past year, the Council has received clerical assistance one and a half days a week from Heather McKenna through the Department of Labour.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

I. Meetings

The Advisory Council usually meets once a month for a full day. During 1982-83 the Council met and discussed the following topics:

21 April 1982

- Council conference planning
- 1982-83 Council budget
- Maternity leave provisions
- Occupational Health and Safety recommendations
- Guest: Allan Andrews, Department of Community Affairs - drug and alcohol peer education program

19 May 1982

- Orientation for new members
- Human Rights Act
- Incest
- Council Priorities 1982-83
- Guest: Hon. Patrick Binns, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

23 June 1982

- Pensions
- Pornography
- Affirmative Action
- Part-time work

21 July 1982

- Daycare
- Mammography testing
- Women and Science - Report "Who Turns the Wheel?"
- Guest: Lawson Drake, biology professor and member of the Science Council of Canada

18 August 1982

- Advisory Council brochure
- Civil Service Commission
- Daycare
- Guest: Kathy Rochon, daycare coordinator in the P.E.I. Department of Health and Social Services

16 September 1982

- Provincial Election issues
- "Women in the Island Economy" conference plans
- Representation on boards and agencies

21 October 1982

- Rape Crisis Centre
- Canada employment outreach policy
- Conference reports

25 November 1982

- Pornography
- Daycare
- Domestic violence
- Guest: Hon. Leone Bagnall, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

13 January 1983

- Ten Year Report
- Green Paper on Pensions
- Pornography
- Joint Presidents' Meeting in Charlottetown

17 February 1983

- Pay T.V.
- Equality rights for native women
- Workers' Compensation Act
- Adoption leave
- Committee reports

17 March 1983

- Pornography
- Appointments
- Child Care Service Study
- Ten Year Report

II. Briefs and Submissions

1. To the Minister of Labour (April 1982)
   - A review of proposed maternity leave provisions to be included in the P.E.I. Labour Act.

2. To the N.D.P. Task Force on Older Women (June 1982)
   - An overview of issues and concerns of older women in the areas of income, health, housing and transportation and their emotional, intellectual and interpersonal needs.

3. To the Task Force on Micro-Electronics and Employment (July 1982)
   - A brief outlining the impact of micro-electronics on women's employment, health considerations and training opportunities.

4. To the Minister of Health and Welfare Canada (July 1982)

   — A brief proposing recommendations for pension reform including an expanded Canada Pension Plan and improved private pension coverage through portability and a shorter vesting period.

5. To the Minister of Employment and Immigration Canada (October 1982)

   — A paper on future outreach policy recommending that employment outreach programs for women be provided with adequate and stable funding.

6. To the Social Development Committee of Cabinet (January 1983)

   — A brief expressing concern over the closures of licensed child-care centres in P.E.I. and recommending legislation and funding to ensure the availability of affordable quality daycare in P.E.I.

7. To the Workers' Compensation Act Review Committee (February 1983)

   — A brief recommending ways this legislation can more accurately reflect the needs of women as members of the labour force in serves to regulate and protect.

8. To the Island Media

   — 25 news releases were issued over the year by the Council on such topics as child-care, election issues, pensions and pornography.

III. Conferences and Engagements:

The Council was represented at the following meetings or conferences:

— "Women in the Canadian Economy", Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Halifax, April 1982.

— "Women and Pensions", Health and Welfare Canada, Charlottetown, May 1982.

— "Women and the Chip", Canadian Congress on Learning Opportunities for Women, Charlottetown, May 1982.

— Joint Advisory Councils' Presidents' Meeting, Ottawa, June 1982.

— National Women's Consultation Meeting, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Ottawa, June 1982.

— "Positive Choices for Women", P.E.I. Women's Institute, Charlottetown, Stepember 1982.

— National Conference on Daycare, Winnipeg, September 1982.

— Joint Advisory Councils' Meeting, St. John's, October 1982.

— "Initiatives", Progressive Conservative Women's Association of Nova Scotia, Halifax, October 1982.

— Affirmative Action Briefing, P.E.I. Civil Service Commission, Charlottetown, November 1982.

— "Sexism in Research and its Policy Implications," Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, Ottawa, November 1982.

— Annual P.E.I. Human Rights' Conference, Charlottetown, December 1982.

— Women in Support of Fishing Conference, Charlottetown, December 1982.

— Joint Advisory Councils' Presidents Meetings, Charlotteown, January 1983.

— Liberal Women of P.E.I. Meeting, Charlottetown, February 1983.

— PSA Human Rights Committee Meeting, Charlottetown, February 1983.

— Kiwanis' Club Meeting, Charlottetown, February 1983.

— Career Exploration for Women Course, Summerside, February 1983.

— National Women's Consultation Meeting, Ottawa, March 1983.

— "Science Education," Science Council of Canada, Charlottetown, March 1983.

PRIORITIES

I. Day Care

In the period from September 1981 to September 1982, ten licensed day care centres closed in P.E.I. which meant a loss of 183 spaces and 18 staff positions. This fact along with the information that this province does not provide direct grants to day care centres and the salaries of early childhoold workers in P.E.I. rank the second lowest in Canada is why the Advisory Council chose day care as a priority issue this year.

The chairperson of the Council's day care committee attended the 2nd National Day Care Conference in Winnipeg. The P.E.I. delegates to this conference have met regularly since September 1982. In December 1982, the Advisory Council joined several groups in presenting a brief in support of increased funding for child care programs to P.E.I. Minister of Health and Social Services.

In January 1983, the Advisory Council presented its own brief "Day Care - Critical Concern of the 80's" to the Social Development Committee of Cabinet. The Hon. Albert Fogarty responded to the Council's recommendations by indicating that a proposal for maintenance grants to day care centres would be presented to the P.E.I. Legislature. He also asked the Council to serve on a Child Care Service Study Committee he was establishing which would report in May 1983.

II. The Economy

During 1981-82, employment issues had been the main focus of the Council's activities so it was decided that the Council's bi-annual conference would be on the role of women in the Island economy. On October 1st, 1982, approximately 160 women and men attended workshops on property and assets, women in small business, the economic value of homemaking and volunteer work, and negotiating in the workplace. The proceedings of this conference were published by the Council in a report entitled "Women in the Island Economy."

III. Liaison

Working with other women's organizations to create programs on reforms needed by women in Prince Edward Island is always a priority of the Advisory Council.

1. *Common Ground*: The Council writes a column in each issue of this Island women's journal and serves on the editorial committee.
2. *Domestic Violence*: The Council is represented on an interagency committee organized through the Justice Resource Division to coordinate efforts to improve services for the victims of domestic violence.
3. *Rape and Sexual Assault*: The Council has contributed the services of its executive assistant to help the P.E.I. Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre establish a 24-hour crisis line and a public education program.

IV. Pornography

The Advisory Council established a pornography committee in June 1982 to study the nature and extent of pornographic material available in P.E.I. In January 1983, the Council urged Islanders to join a nationwide protest against pornographic programming on First Choice Pay T.V. The Council received over 100 phone calls from women and men letting the Council know they had registered their opposition with various government representatives.

In March 1983, the Council mailed out a discussion paper on pornography and free speech by Maude Barlow, president of the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography, and a list of suggestions for what to do to over 300 Island groups and individuals. The Council will be making a presentation to the Social Development Committee of Cabinet and the Justice Minister in the near future.

V. Ten Year Report

In 1973, the Provincial Advisory Committee on the Status of Women in Prince Edward Island published its final report. This report contained over forty recommendations concerning the political, economic, legal, family and educational situation of women in this province. The Advisory Council surveyed the action taken on these recommendations in the past decade and will be releasing a Ten Year Report in the Fall 1983.

P.E.I. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

1 April 1982 to 31 March 1983

Revenue

Province of Prince Edward Island	$ 30,500.00
Interest	1,145.79
Refund	100.00
Retained Income	2,059.23
Special Account	3,651.39
Total Revenue	$ 37,456.41

Expenses

Advertising	$ 560.18
Conferences	1,762.03
Honoraria	7,142.00
Office	368.71
Photocopier	1,005.51
Public Education	1,124.96
Salary and Employee Benefits	20,218.87
Subscriptions	371.79
Sundry	48.60
Telephone	780.52
Travel (In-Province)	1,907.85
Total Expenses	$ 35,291.02
BALANCE on hand - March 31, 1983	$ 2,165.39